

Some excerpts from:  
**THE SOCIAL WORLD AS MYSTERY CENTER:  
THE SOCIAL VISION OF ANTHROPOSOPHY**  
by Harry Salman

*As traditions and social instincts weaken, people increasingly try to exert power over others and use others to serve their needs. Many people want to make themselves unassailable and invulnerable and retreat to private islands. Communication becomes problematic as well. We want to meet and understand each other but it becomes more difficult to create true human relationships.*

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*However, a social impulse lives deep within and Steiner wanted to address this impulse. He pointed to our personality and our ego, which has increased in strength over the last centuries...Steiner considered it part of our natural development to become more and more antisocial...This egoism will ultimately lead to a war of all against all if it is not checked. Our culture, however, also contains forces that want to bring a socially oriented way of life to development in which people can live together in a brotherly way.*

p. 29

*It is an impulse to make room for the other inwardly in our soul and outwardly in social forms. Then the other's need may be experienced so that we can care about them in full consciousness and freedom. With this social impulse the voice of our heart finds expression in our deeds; it is a universal-human voice showing our social attitude of wanting to unite with others.*

p. 29

*Dieter Brüll made an important distinction between asocial and antisocial...he wrote that we are asocial when we separate from others to develop ourselves. We are antisocial when we take earthly goods to consume them. Both, asocial and antisocial, belong to being human and are morally neutral. This changes when we impose the products of our spiritual development, our ideas on others or exploit them so that we can consume more.*

p. 30

*Steiner showed how a social impulse could become active in the human soul as the fruit of an inner development when the social element is brought into day-consciousness from the world of night-consciousness. This is connected to the awakening of the higher being (our individuality, also called the Self or higher ego).*

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*...archetypal phenomenon of communication, which is the basis of all social life...In the conscious exercise of the archetypal phenomenon of social life, love is activated between people. This can lead to a meeting in which Christ can be with them.*

p. 32

Only when we force our ideas on others out of our asocial drive and exploit others out of our antisocial drive do we make the other into an object. Our drives must be curbed for the relationship to the other to be social. Then, out of a social impulse, we can make the need of the other the motif of our actions.

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The individual social impulse can be active only through concrete meetings where people can express their needs.

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In this lecture [December 12, 1918 in Bern] Steiner said that we are social in our sleep and in waking only when we are able to rescue something from sleep bringing it over into day-consciousness. He then described conversations between people as an unconscious process of sleeping into the other (listening) and awakening in oneself (speaking). If I want to understand what another person wants to say, I must be ready to be put to sleep (in a metaphorical sense) for as long as the other speaks. I give up my self-consciousness temporarily and to a certain extent, and due to this sacrifice the other can fill me with his being. In this condition I give myself entirely over to the other to perceive with full attention their individuality in what they say. In this moment I am social, but only until my asocial drive cannot bear it any longer and I throw the other out of myself. Then I can say something because I am myself again. Now it is a question of whether I can carry over into waking up what the other entrusted to me. To the degree to which I can hold this in my consciousness, I come to insights that I can bring into conversation by taking the word and putting the other to sleep.

It involves practicing two skills: freeing a space for the other so that he or she can speak undisturbed, and the ability to hold in awakening what the other said. . . . The archetypal phenomenon of social life only leads to this meeting when we learn to manage it in consciousness, that is, when we can consciously follow the movement of the pendulum between falling asleep and awakening and find the way to the heart of the other. We must develop abilities of soul like having a strong interest, listening, presence of mind, objectivity, and the skill to understand the other from the inside.

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In conversation, of course, falling asleep and awakening do not take place in the common sense. They are two gestures: in falling asleep we find the female, sympathetic gesture and in awakening the male, the antipathetic gesture. In the sympathetic movement our soul opens to the other and tries to take the being of the other into our heart. Our forces of consciousness must be strengthened in order to understand what the other really wants to say. In falling asleep we pass over the threshold of the spiritual world and need an active, awake receptivity, as in meditation and sleep as well, to live our spiritual experiences consciously. The gesture of awakening (when I can speak) means that in speaking I contact my higher being in another person, that is, in the space he or she creates inside for me.

p. 40

The force of love lives in the archetypal phenomenon of social life. We always have to sacrifice self-consciousness to a certain extent to take the other into ourselves. The other person can then become the source of my social consciousness. We can, by giving back what we heard, unite the other more deeply with him or her self out of meeting his or her real being.

p. 41

The social impulse leads me to inwardly make room for others so that they can speak about their needs and I can freely and consciously relate to these needs out of my own possibilities. It demands a certain development of soul, but Steiner also showed how Anthroposophy could create a space in social life where people can become visible in their needs as human beings. The image of the other can reappear in our social consciousness. The social impulse can accomplish this in society as well.

p. 58-59

With the social impulse Anthroposophy received a path of development of our heart forces. We know Anthroposophy usually as a path of development of consciousness where thinking and willing interweave. But in the social impulse we have to sacrifice self-consciousness ever again to take the other into ourselves. It takes place in the core of our being, in our heart. The particular path of development of the heart forces is not the male path of cognition but the female path of empathy, sensibility and social feeling, always oriented to the other human being, increasingly reaching purity. Compassion and interest in the other then deepen into the force of love.

This social path brings us to a future path of brotherhood, in which man takes the other into his inner being, as Steiner described.

p. 59

In order to bring the social impulse to development we must do inner work. We can not be social out of our ego, only out of our higher being.

p. 60

Whereas each went an individual path in the old mysteries, the new mysteries take place in social life. The new mysteries bring a social principle into spiritual life; whereas the social impulse of Anthroposophy brings spiritual principles into social life.

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